



Guideline on Dual Relationships and Conflict of Interest

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Citation:

Working Animals Federation of Australia (WAFA), "Guideline on Dual Relationships and Conflict of Interest", Version 1.0 June 23, 2025, www.workinganimals.com.au/guidance

Purpose

This guideline outlines the principles and procedures for managing dual relationships and conflicts of interest in the provision of services, assessments, and support for working animals and their handlers. Its aim is to ensure fairness, transparency, and the well-being of all individuals and animals involved.

Scope

This guideline applies to all WAFA members, employees, contractors, assessors, trainers, and affiliated personnel involved in assessments, decision-making, or service provision related to working animals.

Standard Statement

All individuals must maintain professional boundaries, disclose potential conflicts of interest, and act impartially to ensure that personal, familial, or financial relationships do not influence professional judgment or outcomes.

Definitions

- **Dual Relationship:** Occurs when a professional has more than one type of relationship with a person or organisation, such as personal, familial, or employment connections, which could influence objectivity.
- **Conflict of Interest:** Occurs when personal, financial, or other interests have the potential to interfere with professional judgment, decision-making, or impartiality.

Guidelines for Managing Dual Relationships and Conflicts of Interest

1. **Disclosure**
 - All dual relationships or potential conflicts of interest must be disclosed to WAFA as soon as practicable.
 - Disclosure ensures transparency and allows for reassignment or independent review where necessary.
2. **Assessment Restrictions**
 - Individuals must not conduct assessments (e.g., WAFA Public Access Test [PAT]) on family members, partners, friends, neighbours, or employees where a personal or professional relationship exists.
 - Employers must not assess their own employees or colleagues in a way that may compromise impartiality.
3. **Decision-Making and Resource Allocation**
 - Any decisions regarding funding, service delivery, or product allocation must be free from personal or financial influence.

- Individuals with potential conflicts must recuse themselves from decision-making.

4. Maintaining Professional Boundaries

- Clear distinctions between personal and professional roles must be maintained at all times.
- Where dual relationships cannot be avoided, independent review or a second opinion is recommended to ensure fairness.

5. Examples of Inappropriate Dual Relationships

- A trainer or assessor evaluating a family member, partner, or close friend.
- An employer assessing an employee's assistance animal.
- A breeder with a financial interest assessing an animal for potential assistance animal certification.

6. Actions to Take in Case of Conflict of Interest

- Step 1: Disclose any potential conflict or dual relationship immediately.
- Step 2: Recuse oneself from the assessment, decision-making, or advisory role.
- Step 3: Assign a neutral third-party professional to undertake the relevant duties to ensure impartiality.

7. Enforcement and Accountability

- Adherence to this guideline is a condition of WAFA membership and participation.
- All members must comply with the WAFA Code of Ethics, which outlines expectations regarding dual relationships and conflicts of interest.
- Concerns or breaches should be reported to the appropriate WAFA authority for investigation and resolution.

Review

This guideline will be reviewed annually or as necessary to ensure alignment with evolving industry standards, accessibility requirements, and WAFA's strategic mission.

Document Control

Version	Date	Author	Change Description	Approved By
V1.0	23/07/2025	V. Solomon	Initial	C.Williams